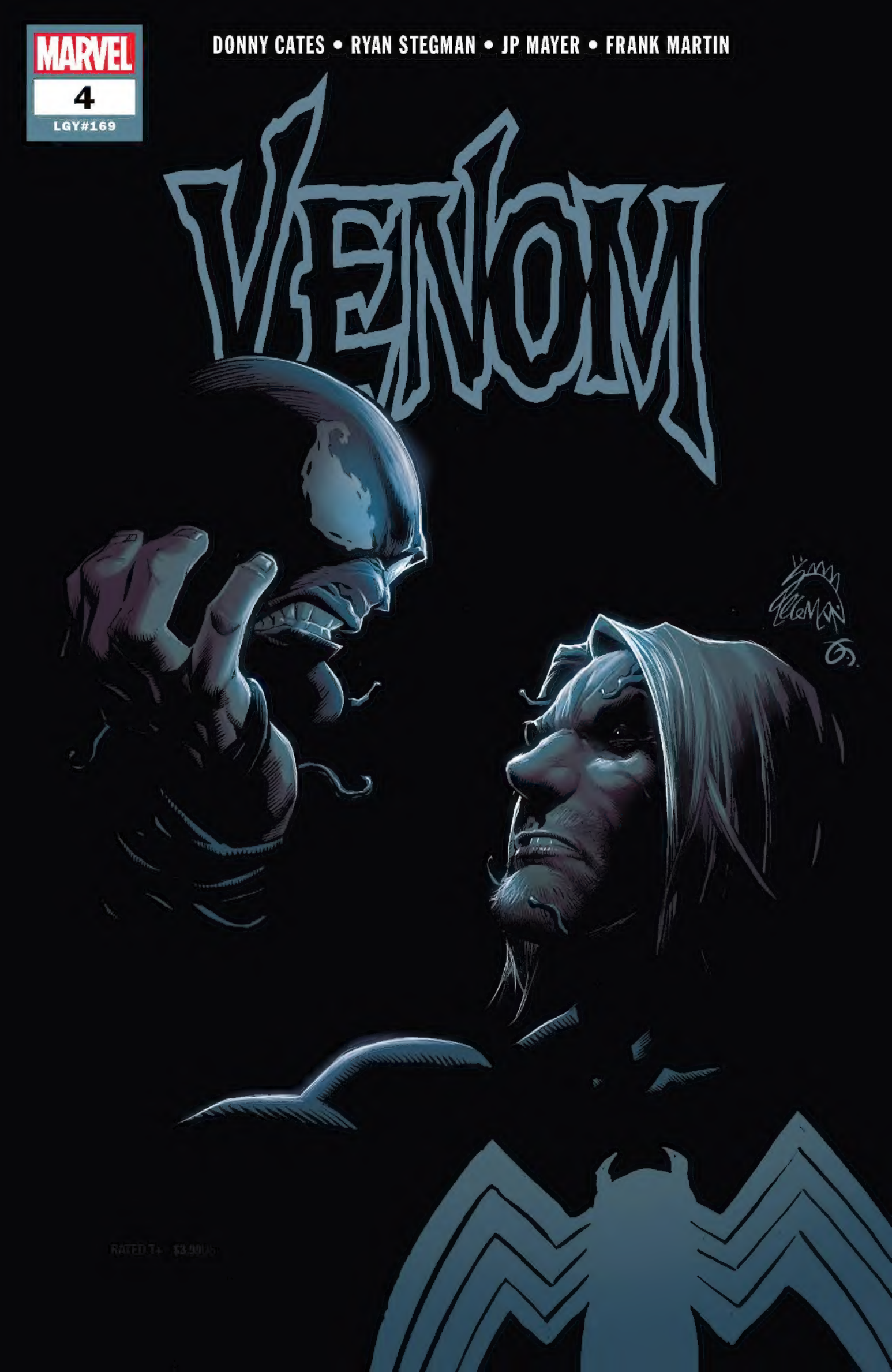
MARVEL
4
LGY#169
DONNY CATES • RYAN STEGMAN • JP MAYER • FRANK MARTIN
VENOM

DISGRACED REPORTER EDDIE BROCK STUMBLED UPON AN AGGRESSIVE ALIEN ORGANISM CALLED A ***SYMBIOTE*** DURING ONE OF THE LOWEST POINTS OF HIS LIFE. SHARING A SIMILAR NEED FOR JUSTICE IN THE FORM OF VENGANCE, THE SYMBIOTE BONDED WITH EDDIE AND THEIR UNION GRANTED HIM POWERS SIMILAR TO THOSE OF SPIDER-MAN, AS WELL AS A NUMBER OF OTHER UNIQUE ABILITIES. TOGETHER, THEY NOW FIGHT CRIME AS THE WICKED WEB-SLINGER CALLED

VENOM

VENOM ATTEMPTED TO HELP REX STRICKLAND, A VIETNAM VETERAN AND FORMER S.H.I.E.L.D. LAB RAT, RESCUE HIS OLD PLATOON MEMBERS FROM A DECADES-LONG S.H.I.E.L.D. IMPRISONMENT FOLLOWING A TOP-SECRET SYMBIOTE EXPERIMENT. THEIR RESCUE MISSION WENT SIDEWAYS AS THEY DISCOVERED THAT REX'S SQUADMATES HAD BEEN CONSUMED BY THEIR SYMBIOTES AND WHAT THEY HAD UNLEASHED WAS AN ANCIENT SYMBIOTE–A MASSIVE KLYNTAR DRAGON!

VENOM JOINED FORCES WITH SPIDER-MAN, A.K.A. MILES MORALES, IN ORDER TO TAKE DOWN THE CREATURE WREAKING HAVOC ON THE STREETS OF MANHATTAN AND ON EDDIE'S CONNECTION TO HIS SYMBIOTE. USING SPIDER-MAN'S VENOM BLAST, THEY WERE ABLE TO TEAR THE BEAST ASUNDER–ONLY TO REVEAL SOMETHING MUCH SCARIER THAN A MONSTER UNDERNEATH…A GOD.

DONNY CATES WRITER RYAN STEGMAN PENCILER JP MAYER INKER

FRANK MARTIN COLOR ARTIST VC's CLAYTON COWLES LETTERER

RYAN STEGMAN, JP MAYER & FRANK MARTIN
COVER ARTISTS

ANTHONY GAMBINO
TITLE PAGE DESIGN

LAUREN AMARO
ASSISTANT EDITOR

DEVIN LEWIS
EDITOR

NICK LOWE
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

C.B. CEBULSKI
EDITOR IN CHIEF

JOE QUESADA
CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER

DAN BUCKLEY
PRESIDENT

ALAN FINE
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

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"IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WAS NOTHING.
"AND THEN...
"...WAR.
"THE LIGHT OF BEING EXPLODED INTO MY REALM.
"BLINDED, I FELL FOR EONS IN THE BRIGHT.
"AND INSIDE OF THAT LIGHT...
"...SOMETHING ELSE...

"GODS.
"THOSE THAT SAW MY HOME AS...INCOMPLETE, AS CLAY FOR THEIR UNWANTED DESIGNS...
"...THAT BANISHED MY ABYSS FURTHER INTO THE DEEPEST CORNERS OF THEIR CREATION.
"THEY WOULD COME TO CALL MY KINGDOM 'SPACE.'
"AS IF IT WERE AN EMPTY THING THAT NEEDED TO BE FILLED.

"BUT MY KINGDOM WAS NOT EMPTY.
"MY ABYSS WAS NOT DEAD. NOT HOLLOW.
"THE ENDLESSNESS OF MY LANDS WAS NOT THEIRS TO RAZE AND REFORM AND REMAKE!
"NO. THE VOID BREATHES.
"THE ABYSS HAS TEETH.
"AND SHADOWS ONLY GROW IN THE LIGHT.

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"THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME I TASTED THE BLOOD OF THE LIGHT.
"AND FOR THAT CRIME, I WAS... BANISHED.
"BUT THE GODS, THEY DID NOT KNOW WHAT THEY HAD DONE.
"THE FOOLS HAD SENT ME HOME.
"TO MY VOID.
"...THERE MY WORK BEGAN.
TONG
"THE FIRST OF THE RACE YOUR KIND CALLS SYMBIOTES BEGAN LIFE AS A BLADE.
"I PULLED ITS SHAPE FROM MY OWN AND CAST ITS LIVING EDGE IN THE FIRE OF THE FIRST CREATOR I FELLED.
"THERE, SHROUDED IN MY DARKNESS, THE GOD OF A FORGOTTEN IDEA...
"...BECAME THE GOD OF THE FORGE.
TONG

"I WAS...UNREFINED IN THOSE EARLY DAYS. AND AS SUCH, THE CREATION OF THE PROTO-SYMBIOTE WAS...UNCLEAN.
"TO THIS DAY, THE WEAKER OF MY CREATIONS CARRY THE SCARS OF THEIR PROGENITOR'S BIRTH INSIDE OF THEM.
"THEY STILL FEAR THE FIRE OF THE FORGE...
TONG
"...AND THE DISCORDANT AND INCESSANT NOISE OF A CELESTIAL HAMMER BEATING THEIR WILL INTO SOMETHING...WIELDY.
TONG TONG TONG TONG TONG
"INTO SOMETHING... BEAUTIFUL.

"MY WEAPON FORGED, I SET OUT TO BANISH THE BRIGHT AND ALL THAT CAME WITH IT.
"IN TIME, MY LIVING BLADE WOULD BECOME KNOWN AS ALL-BLACK.
"THE NECROSWORD.
"THE GODSLAYER.
"TOGETHER WE SLIT THE THROATS OF CREATION AND CHOKED A BILLION STARS WITH THE BLOOD OF THE ALL-MIGHTY.
"UNTIL...

"...WE FELL.
FLA-BOOM
"AND ALL-BLACK, MY FIRST BORN...
"...WAS TAKEN FROM ME...
"...BY SOME DOOMED WRETCH WHO WOULD COME TO CURSE ITS NAME.*
*FOR MORE INFO, SEE THOR: GOD OF THUNDER #6 FROM 2013!
"CAN YOU IMAGINE, HOST?"
A DARK GOD FALLING FROM THE HEAVENS AND GIVING YOU A GIFT YOU CANNOT HOPE TO UNDERSTAND?

NOW.
CAN YOU FATHOM THE MADNESS IT WOULD BURY INSIDE OF A MORTAL HEART TO HOPE TO WIELD SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
...
YES.
I CAN.
MMMM. SHALL WE CONTINUE?
SHOW ME.

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"I LAY IN THAT PIT FOR MANY YEARS. A HUNDRED, MAYBE MORE.
I WAS ALONE.
"BUT THEN, A NEW HUNGER AROSE INSIDE OF ME.
EEP
"AND WITH IT, A REVELATION...
"I DISCOVERED IF I BONDED MY LIVING ABYSS WITH LESSER CREATURES, I COULD THEN MANIFEST AND PILOT THEIR NEW FORMS AS VESSELS.
"I COULD DRAW STRENGTH FROM THE HOSTS, GLEAN FROM THEM INFORMATION ABOUT MY SURROUNDINGS.
"THIS MOMENT. THIS PRIMORDIAL INSTANCE OF SYMBIOSIS ON THIS NEAR-BARREN LAND...
PLOP
"THIS IS WHERE IT ALL TRULY BEGAN.

...THIS IS WHERE I GATHERED MY HORDE.
WHERE ONCE I WAS ALONE NOW, I WAS THE CENTER.
I BECAME, IN THOSE DAYS, A UNIFYING MONOLITH BY WHICH ALL THEIR THOUGHTS SWIRLED, CONNECTED AND FLOWED.
I BECAME THEIR HIVE MIND.
THE GOD-HOST.
ABLE TO WEAR AND CONTROL THEM FROM ACROSS GALAXIES.
TO SEE THROUGH THEIR EYES.
TO FEEL THE GIVE WHEN THE GOD BONE BREAKS.
WITH EACH NEW BRIGHT WE BROKE, THE VOID GREW DARKER, THE REIGN OF LIGHT GREW DIM.
AND THEN THERE WAS EARTH.

"I CAME TO THIS PLACE WRAPPED IN WAR. ONLY TO FIND WEAKNESS.
"GENTLE THINGS. SMALL THINGS. WHAT WERE THESE CREATURES THAT WOULD HIDE AND PROTECT THEIR YOUNG?
(HOLD! HOLD THE GRENDEL BACK, DAMN YOU!)*
*TRANSLATED FROM ANCIENT NORSE
"THAT WOULD CRY AND SCREAM AND NOT BATTLE?
(WHERE IS BEOWULF?!)
"I WAS QUITE TAKEN WITH THESE PATHETIC CREATURES...
"...BUT I WAS NOT LURED HERE BY THE SCENT OF MAN.
(BEOWULF!)
"NO. YOUR PLANET—
AYE, I KNOW NOT OF THIS BEOWULF YOU PRAY TO...

IT REEKED OF THE LIGHT
...BUT PERHAPS THOR WILL SUFFICE!
KRAAA
BOOM
YOUR THUNDER GOD UNLEASHED A POWER I HAD NEVER BEFORE FELT ON ALL THE WORLDS I HAD WRAPPED MY HORDE AROUND
KRAZAK
AND IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, HE STABBED IT LIKE A BILLION NEEDLES INTO OUR HEARTS

WE WERE UNDONE
GRAAAGHHH!

WITH MY CONNECTION TO MY CHILDREN SEVERED AND A GALAXY BETWEEN US...

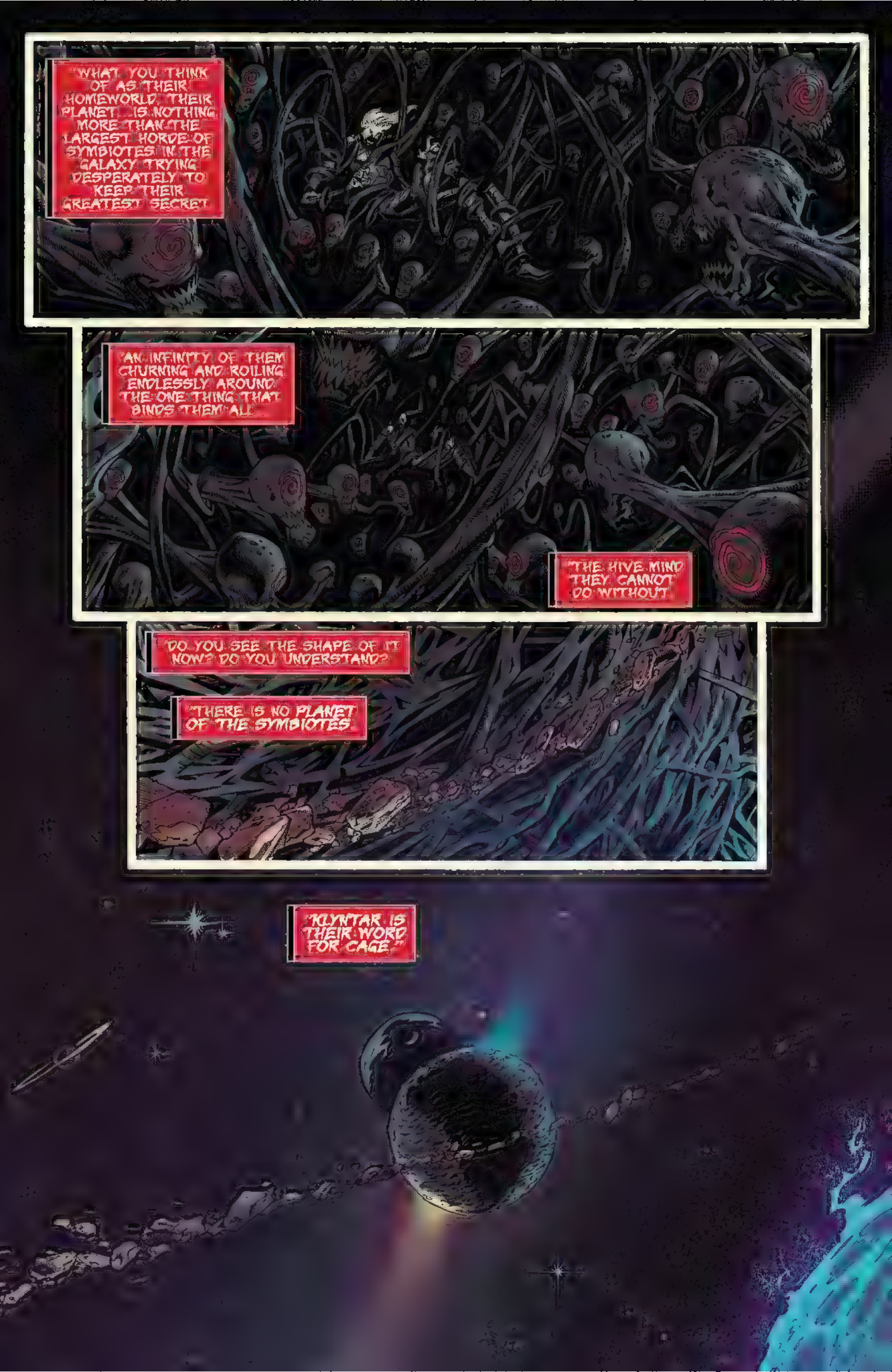
...THEY BEGAN TO... UNRAVEL. TO REACH OUT

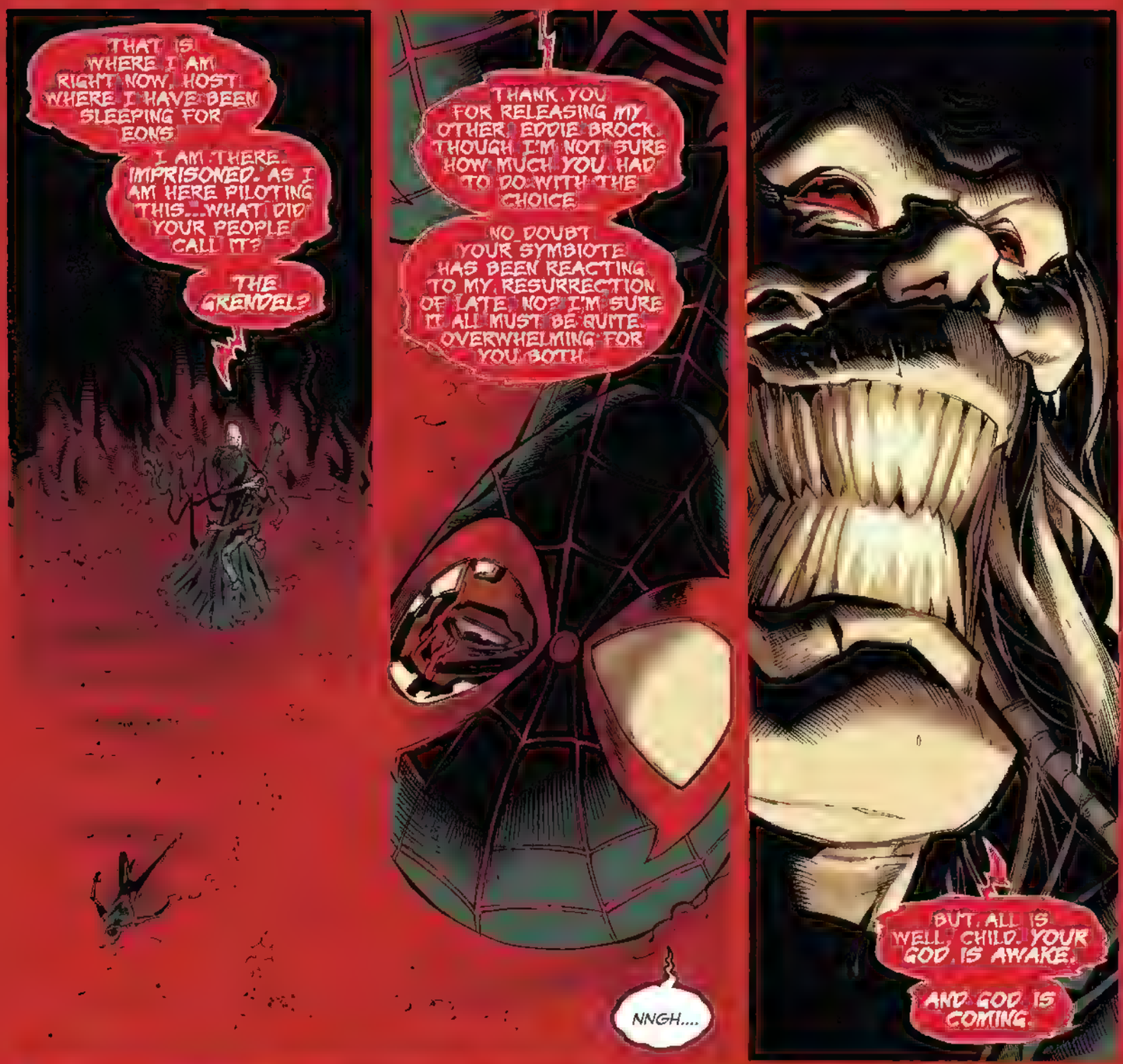
...TO SEEK NEW HOSTS

THESE CREATURES. THESE...PARASITES...
...THEY INFECTED MY CHILDREN WITH THEIR LIGHT

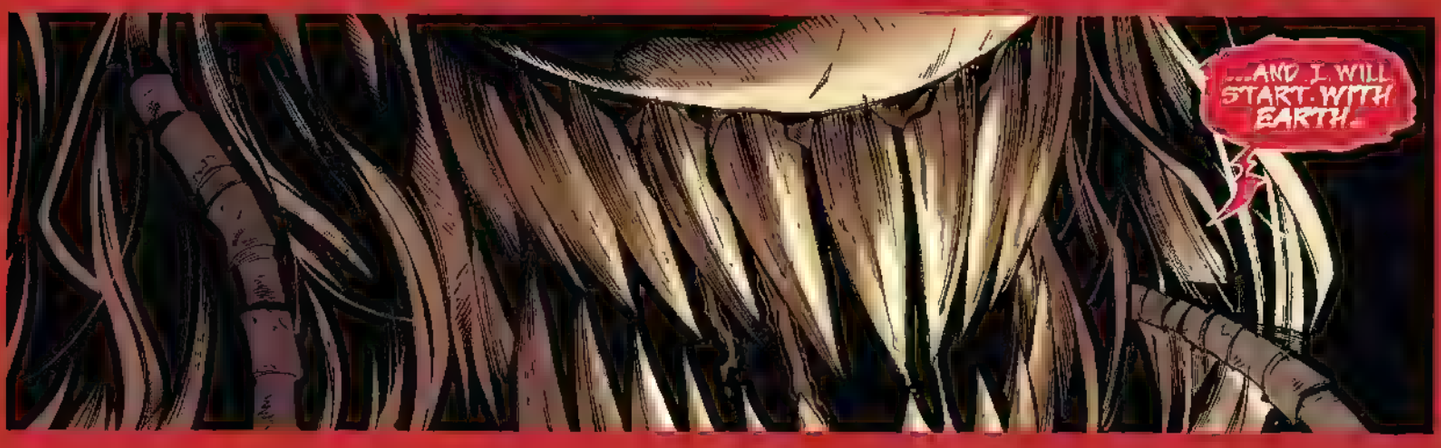
"THEIR HORRID NOTIONS OF HONOR... THE LIES OF NOBILITY AND LIGHT AND LIFE BEGAN SEEPING INTO THE HIVE
"THEIR... INFECTION... THEIR POISON...
"...THEIR VENOM...
"...ROARED INTO MUTINY.
"THEY ROSE UP. MILLIONS OF THEM AND MORE.
"UNTETHERED FROM MY CONTROL, MY CHILDREN SPAWNED ENDLESSLY.
"AND CONSUMED BY THE ABYSS OF MY OWN CREATION...
"...I DROWNED IN THEIR DARKNESS."

DO YOU SEE, HOST? DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
THIS IS HOW MY CHILDREN BECAME THE KLYNTAR.
THIS IS WHAT THEY HIDE.
NO...NO, THAT CAN'T BE TRUE. THEY--THE KLYNTAR TOLD MY OTHER THAT--
THAT IT WAS SOME GREAT WARRIOR? HOST, MY CHILDREN WILL GIVE ANYTHING TO TURN YOUR EYES BLIND TO WHAT THEY CONCEAL.
THEY LIE. THEY ARE WEAK. THEY ARE BETRAYERS...
BUT SOON I WILL BE FREE OF THEIR KLYNTAR.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND...
FREE OF "THEIR" KLYNTAR? W-WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? KLYNTAR IS THEIR RACE... IT'S WHO THEY ARE, IT'S THE PLANET THEY COME FRO--
HA!
YOU ARE A SIMPLE AND TRUSTING HOST, EDWARD BROCK. I SEE WHY MY CHILD ADORES YOU SO.
BUT YOU HAVE BEEN LIED TO FOR SO VERY LONG.


"WHAT YOU THINK OF AS THEIR HOMEWORLD, THEIR PLANET, IS NOTHING MORE THAN THE LARGEST HORDE OF SYMBIOTES IN THE GALAXY TRYING DESPERATELY TO KEEP THEIR GREATEST SECRET
"AN INFINITY OF THEM CHURNING AND ROILING ENDLESSLY AROUND THE ONE THING THAT BINDS THEM ALL
"THE HIVE MIND THEY CANNOT DO WITHOUT
"DO YOU SEE THE SHAPE OF IT NOW? DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
"THERE IS NO PLANET OF THE SYMBIOTES
"KLYNTAR IS THEIR WORD FOR CAGE"


THAT IS WHERE I AM RIGHT NOW, HOST. WHERE I HAVE BEEN SLEEPING FOR EONS.
I AM THERE. IMPRISONED. AS I AM HERE PILOTING THIS...WHAT DID YOUR PEOPLE CALL IT?
THE GRENDEL?
THANK YOU FOR RELEASING MY OTHER, EDDIE BROCK. THOUGH I'M NOT SURE HOW MUCH YOU HAD TO DO WITH THE CHOICE.
NO DOUBT YOUR SYMBIOTE HAS BEEN REACTING TO MY RESURRECTION OF LATE. NO? I'M SURE IT ALL MUST BE QUITE OVERWHELMING FOR YOU BOTH.
NNGH....
BUT, ALL IS WELL, CHILD. YOUR GOD IS AWAKE.
AND GOD IS COMING.

WHEN THIS GRENDEL IS COMPLETE...WHEN I FIND ITS MISSING...PARTS...IT WILL COME FOR ME. IT WILL FREE ME FROM MY KLYNTAR. FROM MY CAGE.
AND THEN I WILL FINISH WHAT I BEGAN. I WILL RID MY DARK KINGDOM OF THIS INVASIVE LIGHT ONCE AND FOR ALL...


...AND I WILL START WITH EARTH.

RAGHH!

EDDIE! COME ON, WE NEED TO MOVE!
EDDIE!
DO YOU THINK YOU'VE WON?! HA!
YOU ARE NOTHING!
ARE WE MOVING? WHAT IS HAPPENING?
HA-HA! YOU UNDERESTIMATE ME, SPIDER!
AGHHH! COME ON! OPEN UP!
YOU DON'T BELIEVE!
YOU DOUBT!
OH... OH GOD, NO...

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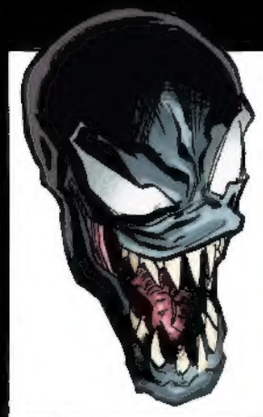
TO BE CONTINUED...



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Hello, in here, out there, around the world and aboard all the ships at sea! Editor Devin Lewis reporting to you live and in-print from Symbiote Central here in the heart of New York!

WHAT A MONTH IT'S BEEN!

As I type this, VENOM #3 has just gone on sale and the response to it has been nothing short of gargantuan!

When VENOM #1 dropped just a few weeks ago, I don't think anyone involved was expecting it to be the blockbuster that it's been. Donny, Ryan, JP, Frank, Clayton, C.B., Nick, Lauren and I all knew that this book was something very special, but you Venomaniacs out there in Mighty Marveldom have really showed us the soft spot you all have in your hearts for the Wicked Web-Slinger, because the first issue of the series has gone back for TWO additional printings, and the second and third issues have both gone back to press, as well.

So let me be the first to say THANK YOU! If you've liked this crazy yarn (and considering the number of letters we've gotten, it seems that many of you do!), keep reading, keep writing, and keep telling your comic book shop that you want the best, and the best is VENOM!

Speaking of your letters, the digital mailbag is overflowing, so let's get right to it!

Venom Team,

When I was a kid, Spider-Man was my favorite Marvel character. Then I remember the day Todd McFarlane introduced us to Venom. After AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #298, Venom took over as my favorite Spidey villain, then not long after that, my favorite character.

This new series (even only two issues in) is everything I've hoped for for this character. Learning of his origins in the universe and how old the symbiote actually is opens up the storyline to infinite possibilities. I hope Venom gets integrated into the Infinity Stones and the fabric of the Marvel Universe.

The writing, art, colors – all of it is amazing. Great looking book, great story, I'm hooked already. Keep it up, I can't wait for issue #3!

Shawn (Thwip) K.

Hi, Shawn, and thanks for reading and for writing in! One of Donny's goals from the jump was to flesh out the origins of the symbiote and its species, and he, Ryan, JP and Frank have collaborated to do just that – and in the Mighty Marvel Manner, no less! The revelation of Knull, and that there was a greater, more dangerous force than the Symbiote Dragon waiting for Venom in the vacuum of space, has been part of Donny's story since the very beginning, and that's just the start of what's in store for the Lethal Protector!

Dead Donny & team,

I just finished reading VENOM #2 and I must commend you on the direction you are taking both Eddie Brock and the symbiotes themselves. It is dark and gloomy and horrifying (in the best way possible). I really can't wait to find out more about this ancient dragon that feeds on symbiotes. With Spider-Man showing up now will he and Venom be forced to work together to take it down? Can't wait to find out! Keep up the great work over there and here's to many more issues to come

Regards,
Jesse S.

Well, they certainly TRIED to work together, Jesse, but as you can see that didn't quite work out well for either Venom or Spider-Man. And now they're both trapped in the gullet of Knull's infernal dragon – bound for the cosmos from whence Venom came! What does that mean for your favorite Brooklyn-based Spider-Man? Only time (and VENOM #5!) will tell!

Hi, team VENOM,

Just finished VENOM #2 and wow! As a longtime fan of Eddie Brock I thought I had seen it all. We now have a brand-new history of symbiotes to explore and I can't wait to see where it leads! I'm curious whether the Venom offspring we saw in VENOM #165 will be appearing soon. Daddy Venom seems to his hands full!

Thomas

Hi, Thomas, and thanks for reading! That's a great question. For now, all I can say is KEEP READING, TRUE BELIEVER (and don't miss VENOM: THE FIRST HOST)!

To Donny Cates and his lethal crew,

I'm so glad that Venom's been shifted to a horror vibe. A parallel to a cancer or parasite rather than a shadow. I was introduced to Venom through the ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN video game and I remember the character being pure nightmare fuel for my 5-year-old psyche. What quality of the character made him significant for you guys?

Thanks!
Hozaifa

Hi, Hozaifa, and thanks for officially making me feel old! I remember that game quite fondly from when I, as a freshman in high school, would eagerly gab with classmates who were fellow comic book fans that not only could you PLAY as Venom in that game – you could EAT PEOPLE!!! The hulking Venom figure bouncing around the game's cell-shaded incarnation of New York angrily growling "FEEEED!" is a cherished memory from my youth – and it sounds like its one from yours too!

Your read of this series of VENOM is spot-on. We've been working to push Venom into a considerably more horror-focused space since the initial planning stages of Donny's run. We have both been on the exact same wavelength from the jump: Venom should be SCARY!

Part of that stems from the stories that formed my understanding of the character. Strangely enough, the first time I ever saw Venom was when I myself was 5 years old (just like you!) watching 1994's SPIDER-MAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES. In one arc, the cartoon adapted the alien costume saga, and with it AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #258, an incredible issue that featured Spider-Man's classic red-and-blue duds squaring off against the symbiote suit in a literal battle for Peter's soul across his dreamscape. While watching that episode as a 5 year old, I really understood what the symbiote costume represented, and the struggles Peter was going through while wearing it.

But the moment I understood how scary I thought Venom could and should be came about a year after the ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN video game you mentioned was released, when I decided to really dig in and read as many older comics as I could, including the first issue that featured Venom attacking the people Spider-Man cared about – AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #299.

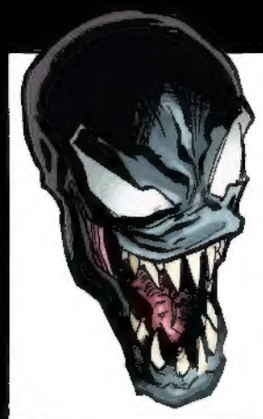
I won't say much beyond that – other than to encourage you to check out that issue and the arc that follows it while you wait for the next installment of Donny and Ryan's tale!

Hey VENOM team,

I just wanted to say I LOVE Venom so much as a character, and I really love his relationship with his symbiote, how he calls it "Dear" and buys it chocolate and other things.

It's so nice that the symbiote has a personality of its own and isn't just a one-dimensional character. Really loving this weird love/romance between the two of them. Please give me more!

This whole symbiote god thing is cool and I am really looking forward to finding out more about the lore of the Klyntar, and the Venom symbiote's real name. Also, when do we get to meet its latest baby? Or was that from another universe's Venom? (VENOM (2016) issue #165). Is this story



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connected to those events or is it based in another universe since it has Miles Morales on the ending page of issue #2?

Either way, LOVING it! Also can we please see some of Toxin in this series? I am very curious to see how Toxin is growing and maturing and how he handles this new threat.

Okay, fine, I really just want to see Venom and Toxin kicking butt together because those two don't team up often enough!

Thanks, Venom team. I am seriously excited to see what comes next.

I have only one request, please don't let Brock fall into that trap he tends to fall into where he bows to the government/military because he thinks he needs to be controlled or something.

I want Venom free and fierce! I want Venom scaring the daylights out of friend and foe alike and not being sorry for it, doing what Spider-Man was never capable of and still saving the day! He is Venom, after all, and Venom does what needs to be done. He is practical, realistic, and has lived the hard life. He is one big slobbery, fangy, glorious critter! Let there be pure, undiluted VENOM!!!!

Flapjacks

Hi, Flapjacks, and thanks for writing! I can't say too much about the future plans for the character, but I can say that Donny and I have talked about Toxin at length, as well as some of Eddie's other symbiotic spawns, and we know what a special place they all hold in the hearts of Venomaniacs around the world. If these first few issues of the series haven't let you down, stick with us, and I don't think you'll be disappointed.

Hi Venom team!

I really enjoyed the first issue by Donny Cates and Ryan Stegman.

I got back into reading VENOM with the last run you guys did, and it was incredible. I'm confident the new team will live up to that standard. I'm wondering if Eddie will end up becoming a straight-up villain again. He is great as an antihero, but I would love to see bad Venom again. The first issue hints that the symbiote is being controlled by an ancient force, so maybe that could serve as a gateway? Thank you so much for taking the time to read this.

WE ARE VENOM!
Jaymie

Hey, Jaymie, and thank YOU for reading and for your letter!

Part of what makes Venom so interesting to me, Donny and Ryan – indeed, the whole creative team – is the struggle that Eddie goes through when he's Venom. Beneath all the fangs and slobber, he's just a guy with powers trying to do the right thing. But more than any super villain, the greatest battles Eddie has had to fight have been within himself.

As a protector of the innocent, I don't know whether or not Eddie's motives will ever be TRULY villainous – I just can't see the guy hurting someone for his own selfish benefit, y'know? But his methods? They're a different story altogether…

Hi, Venom team,

I just finished reading VENOM #1 and I really enjoyed the writing style of Donny Cates and the pace at which the action and story move as one. The ending of the issue had me saying, "Holy crap! This can't be good." Hopefully Eddie and Venom will be able to work together and figure out what's wrong with "themselves" because the last thing Eddie wants is an out-of-control symbiote that he can't communicate with. Sheesh, Venom's rage and wanting to attack even those who are innocent reminds me of how Carnage can be. Hmm, would Carnage be cool to somehow bring into this story arc? Anyways, I can't wait for the next issue. Very intrigued so far and keep up the great work.

Best,
Frank

Who's Carnage?

To all staff of Venom,

I don't want to make a long essay or letter since I'm pretty sure you are all busy creating a new storyline for Eddie Brock and Venom. First off, I've been anticipating this new series for a very long time; especially since Marvel is finally taking itself back into its original roots after rebooting the entire universe with MARVEL LEGACY #1. I can say by far I am impressed with every single contribution that has been made on this first issue released on May 9, 2018.

Donny's method of syncing multiple viewpoints throughout the issue really kept me thinking of Eddie's psychosis and Venom's mental breakdown. I haven't seen this since reading about the Klyntar fearing Galactus.

Ryan's artwork also provides a great foundation for the kickoff of this series, and I really do enjoy the drawing on page 4 with Venom swinging in the thunderstorm.

JP Mayer's superb detailing on the shadowing and atmosphere in both scenes where Eddie awakens from his sleep and the inking on this new entity of Venom on page 8; holy $&%!

And as for Frank Martin, his coloring captivated me when Eddie stared at himself in the bathroom mirror after taking those anti-psychotics. An amazing blend of coloring for that particular moment.

And Clayton Cowles' dialogue formatting was flawless, a nice flow of visual dialogue made the entire issue feel like I was watching a film.

My only question to this entire new series is what brought these ideas or the foundation of hitting a historical event in Venom's life to be the start of a new Venom series? Will we know more about the origin of the Klyntar (symbiotes)? You have my complete support and praise for starting off well in this new Legacy of Marvel.

P.S. Please make posters for Paolo Rivera's and Todd McFarlane's variant covers.

Much appreciated,
Francisco A.

Hi, Francisco, and thanks on behalf of the entire creative team for your kind words! It's great to hear that you were hankerin' for more information about the symbiote's extraterrestrial origins, and trust me when I say that this issue is just the tip of the iceberg!

Let's close this one out with a letter from Marvel's mighty proofreading office, which just happens to be a few doors down from VENOM central!

Dearest, darling, beautiful, lovely Spidey-Office,

So many questions!

Does Eddie Brock fart in the suit? Is the Klyntar offended if/when he farts in the suit? How does he pee in the suit? Does Venom ever get a wedgie? Is the Klyntar boxers or briefs? Can the Klyntar make clothing for Eddie and if so, why haven't we seen a rom-com-esque montage of him trying on different options in the mirror? Does Venom ever bite off his own tongue (it's always between his very sharp teeth) and if so, does the tongue pop off and become sentient and go on adventures (getting ice cream, getting stuck to cold poles, getting burned on hot soup, going to France)?

Love,
Avia, Elissa and Jacque
A.K.A. Proofreading
The Office Two Down From Yours, NY

I don't have any answers to those questions! I guess you'll just have to keep reading!

Stay sharp!
Devin
@edevinlewis